



## Otto Dix Watercolours From The Gurlitt Hoard Auctioned

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**Ten years after the Gurlitt Hoard (“Schwabing Art Trove”) hit the headlines worldwide, two excellent watercolours from Otto Dix will go under the hammer at Ketterer Kunst in Munich, Evening Sale, 10 June Auction. These important works come from the estate of the disgraced Munich collector/dealer Cornelius Gurlitt.**

The two watercolours are of a tremendous art-historical relevance – Robert Ketterer

Dix painted the two watercolours in Düsseldorf in 1922, a period that yielded some of his best-known works, some containing the erotic subject matter of the early 1920s Weimer Republic. These are among the most sought-after works from Dix on the international auction market,” explains Robert Ketterer, auctioneer and head of Ketterer Kunst.

The two watercolours have been in the Kunstmuseum Bern. However, in December 2021, the museum decided to return them to the heirs of the Jewish lawyer and well-known collector Dr Ismar Littmann from Wroclaw. This was part of a package of Nazi restitution. In an amicable agreement with the heirs after Dr Littmann, Ketterer Kunst was entrusted with two more works from the Littmann Collection. In 2021 Ketterer Kunst auctioned Lovis Corinth’s “Klostergarten” and Emil Nolde’s “Buchsaumgarten”, also formerly part of the Collection Littmann.

“The two watercolours are not only of a tremendous art-historical relevance,” says Robert Ketterer, auctioneer and head of Ketterer Kunst. “They are also documents of German history.”

Dr Littmann was a luminary of the Wroclaw art scene and one of the most renowned German art collectors. The art lover and well-known lawyer had a strong liking for the art of his contemporaries. In 1916 he compiled a collection of works by some of the most prominent German artists of Impressionism and Expressionism, among them Otto Dix, Otto Mueller, Käthe Kollwitz, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein, Alexander Kanoldt and Lovis Corinth. The art scene appreciated both his generosity and his keen eye for exceptional and exquisite art. In many cases, works from his collection ended up at important museums. The group is considered one of the 20th century’s most distinguished ones.

Dr Littmann acquired the two watercolours by Dix from Galerie Nierendorf in Cologne in 1924. Due to his background, the Nazis banned him from practising as a lawyer. Littmann’s friend, the Breslau dentist Dr Paul Schäfer, later a persecutee of the Nazi regime, supported the family with art purchases. With no prospects for the future, Ismar Littmann died in September 1934 following a suicide attempt. His widow was forced to sell the art collection to ensure the family’s survival and prepare for their escape from Germany. One day before the works were supposed to be auctioned in 1935, the Gestapo confiscated 64 paintings and many paper works, including those from Otto Dix, under allegations of “cultural Bolshevism”.

They were stored in the Nationalgalerie at the Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin a year later. At the latest 1938, the Dix works became state-owned in the context of the “Degenerate Art” campaign and the subsequently mandated expropriation. Along with three other NS art dealers, Hildebrand Gurlitt took over the sale of the works to raise foreign currency for the state. In this context, he bought the two watercolours for his collection. Gurlitt was also one of the leading agents for the Führermuseum in Linz. He was also involved in Nazi art theft in this function, predominantly in France.

In 1945 American forces seized the Dix watercolours as part of a collection belonging to the NS art trader at the Neue Residenz in Bamberg; however, they returned it in 1950.

Meanwhile Hildebrand Gurlitt had become director of the Kunstverein in Düsseldorf. Later the two works were part of a collection comprising more than 1,500 works that Cornelius Gurlitt inherited from his parents in 1968. Many of these works of art were stolen from collectors as they sought to escape Nazi persecution.

Cornelius Gurlitt lived among this collection for nearly five decades in two apartments in Munich and Salzburg. In 2012 the group was “discovered” in tax investigations and seized by the Munich Department of Public Prosecution. Following, the “Schwabing Art Trove” made global news. In light of his father’s life story, speculations about masses of looted art and fraud were exposed. However, respective evidence could be provided in only fourteen cases. The acclaimed weekly “DIE ZEIT” called the authorities’ course of action a “Bavarian legal scandal”.

“The Kunstmuseum Bern did not only react quickly but also pursued a clear path in the restitution case,” says company owner Robert Ketterer. “The decision set new standards that will also be obligatory for other museums worldwide.”

**Otto Dix – Dompteuse, 1922**

Estimate: US\$ 115,000- 172,500 / € 100,000- 150,000

Munich, May 11, 2022 (KK) – Ten years after the “Schwabing Art Trove”, a discovery that made the headlines around the world, two excellent watercolours from Otto Dix will be called up at Ketterer Kunst in Munich in Germany in the Evening Sale of the June Auction on June 10, 2022. These works come from the estate of the 2014 deceased Munich collector Cornelius Gurlitt. Otto Dix painted the two watercolours in Düsseldorf in 1922, a time that yielded some of his most essential watercolours, which still enjoy great popularity today.

**Otto Dix – Dame in der Loge, 1922**

Estimate: US\$ 161,000-207,000 / € 140,000- 180,000

“Dame in der Loge” (estimate: US\$ 161,000-207,000/ € 140,000- 180,000) appears as a glamorous figure from a world between the demimonde and the bourgeoisie, an enigmatic social typology characteristic of Dix, while the “Dompteuse” (estimate: US\$ 115,000- 172,500 / € 100,000- 150,000) is a telling and punchy combination of the themes rotheland “circus”.

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